

God, should have admitted a prejudice from these associations.

They would not make this impression on a man already devoted to the religion of Jesus Christ. No passion that has become predominant is ever cooled by anything which can be associated with its object, while that object itself continues unaltered. The passion is even willing to verify its power, and the merit of that which interests it, by sometimes letting the unpleasing associations surround and touch the object for an instant, and then chasing them away; and it welcomes with augmented attachment that object coming forth from them unstained; as happy spirits at the last day will receive with joy their bodies recovered from the dust in a state of purity that will leave everything belonging to the dust behind. A zealous Christian exults to feel in contempt of how many counteracting circumstances he can still love his religion; and that this counteraction, by exciting his understanding to make a more defined estimate of its excellence, has resulted in his loving it the more. It has now in some degree even pre-occupied those avenues of taste and imagination, by which alone the ungracious effect of associations could have been admitted. The thing, itself is close to his mind, and therefore the causes which would have misrepresented it by coming between, have lost their power. As he hears the sentiments of sincere Christianity from the weak and illiterate, he says to himself—All this is indeed little, but I am happy to feel that the subject itself is great, and that this humble display of it cannot make it appear to me different from what I absolutely know it to be; any more than a clouded atmosphere can diminish my idea of the grandeur of the heavens, after I have so often beheld the pure azure, and the host of stars. I am glad that it has in this man all the consolatory and all the purifying efficacy, which I wish that my more elevated views of it may not fail to have in me. This is the chief end for which a divine communication can have been granted to the world. If this religion, instead of being designed to make its disciples pure and happy amidst their littleness, had required to receive lustre from their mental dignity, it would have been sent to none of us. At least, not to me; for though I would be grateful for my intellectual advantage over my uncultivated fellow-Christian, I am conscious that